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PYRGHT

## Cuban Course Clear

The news conference at Weisbaden, Germany, at which the nine US fliers shot down by the Russians over the border of Soviet Armenia told the story of the outrageous action of Russian MIG pilots in opening fire and setting their plane ablaze, and the further abuse by Red peasants of the five who were able to parachute from the blazing C-118, has brought more incensed Americans flocking to the standard of Lyle H. Munson, the man who would be a latter day privateer!

Mr. Munson, who served in both the Office of Strategic Services and in the Central Intelligence Agency—and who presently operates a concern called The Bookmailer—formally applied to Congress some days ago for a “letter of marque and reprisal”. Such letters, granted long ago to merchant skippers as authority to fight pirates, have not been issued since the Civil War, but the authority of Congress in the matter stands—in Paragraph 11 of Section 8, Article I of the Constitution—and is as easy to read as ever.

“Fellow Americans,” says the Munson petition, “are being held captive and hostage by pirate and-or rebel groups posing as governments in Communist Russia, Communist East Germany, Communist China, Cuba and Indonesia.” He notes further that “the Office of the Executive is impotent to rectify the above abuses by reason of preoccupation with other pressing matters” and that this is especially unfortunate because “what is now happening may be construed as an open invitation to pirate countries to imprison Americans with impunity”.

Mr. Munson formally declares that he is “prepared to demonstrate financial and moral responsibility to lease, equip and staff a seaworthy man-of-war to liberate these pirate-held American citizens, at personal and private expense and risk”. His “man-of-war”, he thinks, might be a PT boat, a plane or helicopter, and by now the Munson volunteers could man a fleet of any of these.

It is not likely, however, that in these decadent times Congress will give them or Commodore Munson (our title) the opportunity. But the problem, relieved slightly by release of the nine prisoners from the USSR, and aggravated by the arrogant dalliance of Fidel Castro with his US prisoners in Cuba, remains.

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Short of the free-wheeling adventure for which Mr. Munson prays authority, we would not say how the US should go about rescuing the Americans in Russia's slave camps, the fliers in East Germany, the 450 Korean GI's in Red Chinese prisons. But for a starter, the Cuban procedure seems not only simple but obvious. Cuba's independence from Spain was won by American fighting men in 1896. Cuba remained a protectorate of the US until 1934. And, whether we like it or not, Kremlin stooge Castro cut this country in on the deal when he kidnapped our nationals. Our duty in assisting President Batista to restore law and order is abundantly clear.

\* And if Congress won't let Munson go, there are still the Marines.